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"GALLANT SHIP"

Washington, D.C., Propeller
Club Sponsors Luncheon
For Presentation

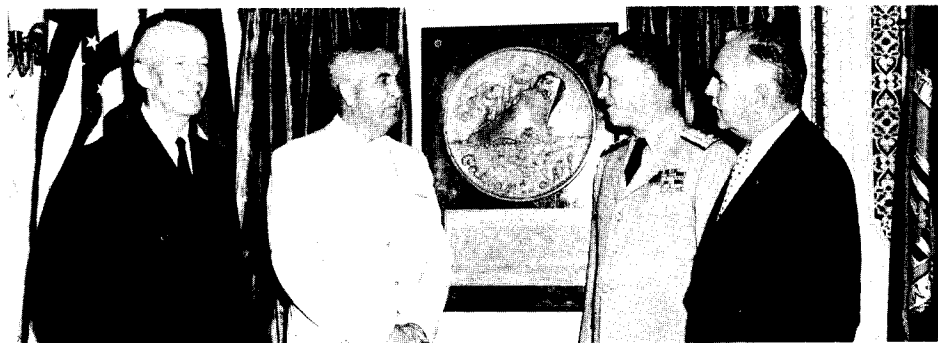
The Propeller Club of the United States, Port of Washington, D.C., under the leadership of Rear Admiral Walter C. Ford, USN, Ret., sponsored a luncheon on August 24th at which the "Gallant Ship" award was presented to the *SS Meredith Victory* and a Meritorious Service Medal to her Captain, Leonard P. LaRue, now Brother Marinus of the Benedictine Order.

Captain LaRue's *Meredith Victory* was operated by Moore-McCormack Lines under a general agency agreement. The ship was in Korean waters late in 1950 when it was learned that Chinese and North Korean forces were converging on the city of Hungnam, off which the ship was lying. The civilian populace was threatened with decapitation of every person in the community for the help they had given the allied forces.

Immediately Captain LaRue made his ship available and then began the evacuation of the city into the 455-foot long ship, that had accommodations for twelve persons besides the crew.

Out from the beach came crash boats and other small craft to the ship's side where men, women and children, many loaded down with their earthly possessions clambered aboard the ship and found a place to stand or, if lucky, to sit. Hour after hour the Captain watched the stream of humanity come on board his vessel. The cargo holds, the 'tween decks, main deck, boat deck and even the standing rigging was covered with humanity.

On this single ship more than 14,000 persons were jammed together and then,



"Gallant Ship" award ceremonies at National Press Club on August 24th. From left to right: Brother Marinus of the Benedictine Order, former Master of the *SS Meredith Victory*; Radm Walter C. Ford, USN, Ret., Deputy Maritime Administrator; Vadm Roy A. Gano, USN, Commander, MSTs and Charles H. Godsoe, and President Propeller Club, Port of Washington, D. C., National Secretary-Treasurer, Propeller Club of the United States.

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when it held all that it could hold, Captain LaRue up-anchored and sailed out of the port, through an enemy mine field extending along her course for thirty miles. There was little food or water for the horde and conditions on board have been called indescribable. But they persevered and three days later, on Christmas Eve, on the island of Koji-do, every refugee who clambered aboard at Hungnam, plus five infants born while the ship was underway, were landed safely.

The feat of the *Meredith Victory*, made possible by the determination of her Master and crew, was publicized in the daily press at the time, but those were days of strife and anxiety along the Korean war-front and the ship's part was lost in the general excitement.

Admiral Ford was Master of Ceremonies and, in addition, representatives of the Moore-McCormack Lines; Captain

La Rue, now Brother Marinus; five members of the crew of the *Meredith Victory*; the Korean Ambassador; the whole Federal Maritime Board; the Commander of the Military Sea Transportation Service, Vice Admiral Roy A. Gano, USN and the

Secretary of Commerce, the Honorable Frederick H. Mueller were at the head table.

About two hundred and fifty Propeller Club members and guests were present for the ceremony.